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You've come a long way, baby

by Will Nicholls

Another year has come and gone. With my increasingly advanced age they seem to fly by faster when it comes time to look back and assess our progress at *the Nation*. That's probably why I value each one more and more. Each time I open a new calendar I celebrate the fact that *the Nation* has survived another year. There are some who gently poke me by saying this newsmagazine is losing the sharp edge that we had in our early years, but the fact is that *the Nation* is maturing along with the Cree Nation.

The Cree of Eeyou Istchee have experienced many changes and challenges over the last 21-plus years that *the Nation* has been chronicling our people's history as it happens. Cree society has changed, and so have we. As with all Cree businesses, organizations and entities, we have evolved. We have never stopped developing, flourishing and reinforcing our way of life despite the many challenges we faced. This is the reality for the Cree people whether it is on an individual, community or regional level.

I am proud that *the Nation* has been a part of this progress. As with the people and organizations that play a part in our unique development, we look to the future while learning from the successes and missteps we have known during years of dramatic change. Many Cree know what it means to not only survive, but to thrive. We also know that this process has no end because we have a huge responsibility to create the best future we can for the generations who will build on our achievements.

The Nation is a survivor. We will continue to document and reflect the change, the challenges and the needs of the Cree. Social change, political choices, economic success or criminal failure, music, art and debate over the issues that matter to us will always fill our pages.

Some people do tell us that *the Nation* is less combative or confrontational than we were in past years. Perhaps this is just a matter of perception. The changes in the way the Cree handle their affairs are certainly different from the way they were 20 or more years ago. In the same way, *the Nation* reflects this change as many of the difficulties and issues we covered in the past have been corrected or are now treated in a more thorough and professional manner.

The Nation will continue to cover important issues, changes and conflicts in Eeyou Istchee. Our mission will always be to give a voice to the Cree people rather than claiming to be the voice of the Cree people – especially because often there is not a single voice from an increasingly complex Cree society. We encourage everyone with concerns or messages to talk to us so we can continue in this vital role. And remember that *The Nation* is proudly independent, as we do not receive funding from official Cree sources.

I am proud of the work we have done in the past and I continue to be proud of the people and the team we have here at *the Nation*. The past year has been an interesting one. We look forward to continuing our work in 2015 with your help.

This pledge is one thing that will never change, no matter how many years pass us by. In the meantime, I want to wish all readers a happy 2015.

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Illustration by Alexandria Neonakis from Sweetest Kulu

The year ahead

by Joshua Iserhoff

Happy New Year to all of you! It is my hope that we all succeed and triumph over the obstacles we may face in 2015. I can honestly say that 2014 was an incredible one. I saw this little curly blonde girl on YouTube standing in front of her washroom mirror and speaking boldly, encouraging herself that she will have a great day, that she was beautiful and so on. I remembered that video when the clock struck midnight! I spoke boldly and proclaimed to the universe that I will have a great and prosperous year and I did.

Words are powerful my friends. You either speak words that are positive for yourself and to others or all negative. I spoke positive good words for my 2015 and if you have forgotten to bless your 2015 because the holidays were too busy, it's not too late to affirm your positivity. It doesn't start with Josh, with Oprah, with the curly blonde girl on YouTube or televangelist Joel Osteen, but it starts with you! We are just mere agents of encouragements and reminders.

I look at my schedule and what I want to achieve professionally, personally and in love. Perhaps I am too busy for love at this moment. Hey, I am told that it will happen unexpectedly. Until then, I am expecting – not a baby, but love.

I will be pretty busy throughout the year as I will be visiting many Cree communities and the one in particular I am excited about is our 11th community (can I say that?): Moose Factory! The Roundtable Capacity Building will be heading out there to host and mingle with our Cree folk.

I, for one, can't wait to meet the members. I will be co-hosting with the talented and gorgeous songstress Marilyn MacLeod and yes, we will be singing at the feast. Don't worry, I will Facebook "our" performance! Chief Allan Jolly and the members await our arrival and I believe that it will be my first time driving on ice. I will Facebook that as well. In the meantime, prayers will be appreciated. I wonder if Johnny Wapachee will have extra hair gel at the gathering… "He's very deadly."

It has been a year since I announced my vegetarianism in reznotes. I am happy to report that I will possibly not continue being one anymore. I have not craved meat at all, but I will have to taste the bear I killed months ago. I'll wait for a family gathering or perhaps kill a moose with Dad sometime in March.

I've publicly said to the Cree Nation that when I'll consume animals with brains I will only eat meat from Eeyou Istchee, such as moose, ptarmigan, bear, porcupine (not a fan), beaver and squirrel (hey, I tasted one with Gramma Iserhoff back in the 1980s). I think I'll wait for my moose. I am told that there's a moose nearby – uh, never mind, I won't divulge the location. I am sure I'll be blessed with one since I've already claimed my moose!

2015 will be great!

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Willie's Place

A new day centre provides a haven for intoxicated homeless people in Val-d'Or

by Amy German

A daytime drop-in centre for homeless people dealing with substance-abuse issues in Val d'Or opened its doors just before Christmas with the assistance of several local organizations, including the city's Native Friendship Centre.

Willie's Place welcomed several people December 22 to informally celebrate the achievement, including Elder Oscar Kistabish (who gave the blessing), Val-d'Or Mayor Pierre Corbeil, a number of project partners, friendship centre staff and, perhaps most importantly, 25 homeless people now surviving the city's mean streets, many of whom are Aboriginal.

Native Friendship Centre Executive Director Edith Cloutier said there will be a formal ceremony on January 20, but the most pressing objective was to open the doors to those most in need of the centre's services throughout the holidays.

"Right now we are concerned with the fact that it is winter and that when people leave La Piaule (emergency shelter) or even if they don't make it there, they are downtown because they don't have anywhere to go and end up in the entrances of businesses and banks. It creates a difficulty in cohabitation and since many of them are Native, there is also that stigma and racism," said Cloutier

Substance abuse impedes access to services or even frontline workers who can help people suffering from addiction, Cloutier noted. Willie's Place is intended to be a quiet haven for these individuals during the day.

The new drop-in centre is in the former Chateau Louis bar. People can go there to rest and get warm. The facility does not for the moment serve food since meal services for the homeless are available elsewhere.

The new drop-in centre in the former Chateau Louis bar.

"The place is named for Willie Hester who passed away a year ago," said Cloutier. "He had been on the streets for seven years and was known here by everyone. When he passed, it created a huge commotion among the homeless as he was like their leader. This place is a symbol of protection, peace and somewhere to show respect towards others."

According to Cloutier, Hester's family was contacted for their blessing in using his name for the establishment. She said they were pleased by this honour and especially by the fact that his tragic end will ultimately mean others in his situation can be helped. Cloutier said Hester's family attended the ceremony that was held in the park where he used to hang out. His children later contacted her to say they had been collecting warm clothes and other items for the homeless.

Other partners in this project include les Centres de santé et de services sociaux (CSSS), La Piaule, Centre Normand (which provides services for those with substance-abuse issues) and the Kitcisakik First Nation.

"This place is for homeless people, both Native and non-Native, but many of them are Cree and Algonquin. The problems that we are having with the homeless is that at La Piaule, people can go and sleep there when they are intoxicated but at 8 am, just like every other emergency shelter, they close and send the people out. But, unlike other major cities, Val-d'Or has had a void in services for people on the street," said Cloutier.

According to Cloutier, the project obtained funding from several municipal, regional and federal sources but more is needed.

Cloutier said Willie's Place is still looking for $7,500 to meet an initial annual budget target of $45,000.

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Sidestepping criticism

Using a private member's bill to amend and replace the Indian Act

by Joshua Grant

Bernard Valcourt, Canada's Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, issued a press release in late December celebrating the passing into law of Bill C-428, a private member's bill aimed at amending and replacing the Indian Act.

Put into motion two years ago by Conservative Member of Parliament Rob Clarke, member of the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation and the Saskatchewan MP for Desnethé–Missinippi–Churchill River, the law repeals certain sections of the Indian Act concerning residential schools, trade restrictions and the sale of alcohol on reserves. The law allows band councils to pass bylaws without written permission from the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. It also requires the minister to report to Ottawa every year on the progress made in replacing the Indian Act.

While most First Nations agree that the Indian Act needs to be re-examined and improved, many people are upset about the lack of consultation with Indigenous communities by the Conservative government. Others note that by using a private member's bill to amend such fundamental legislation, the Conservatives were attempting to avoid negative feedback by treating as a simple initiative by a relatively unknown backbencher rather by the government.

According to an article in the Ottawa Citizen Dec. 11, Clarke was "boastful" about his bill being passed into law before the First Nations Education Act.

According to an article in the Ottawa Citizen Dec. 11, Clarke was "boastful" about his bill being passed into law before the First Nations Education Act. That led Liberal Senator Lillian Dyck, also a Saskatchewan Cree and member of the George Gordon First Nation, to call out Clarke for "white man behaviour."

Dyck apologized for her comments but stated that she does not consider them to be offensive. She also said there are serious flaws in the recently passed legislation.

Bill C-428 does not require the government to report to the Senate about its actions to repeal the Indian Act, only the House of Commons. It does require the government to collaborate with First Nations in regards to amendment and replacement of the Indian Act, but with wording that Dyck says does not legally bind the government to consult with Indigenous peoples.

Valcourt's Press Secretary, Emily Hillstrom, declined to comment on the question of proper consultation and the reasoning behind the Indian Act being replaced by a private member's bill when contacted by the Nation. "Any further questions should be directed to the office of MP Rob Clarke," said Hillstrom.

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Federal law handicaps Barrière Lake

The Algonquin community of Barrière Lake is voicing its frustration with the First Nations Financial Transparency Act, saying the federal government and its appointed third-party financial overseer is withholding information that is necessary to complete documentation required by the new law.

According to the Globe and Mail, close to 50 First Nations were unable to meet the November deadline to declare their annual expenses under the law, resulting in withdrawal of federal funding for administration and economic development expenses.

Chief Casey Ratt argues that his community 230 kilometres north of Ottawa was unable to meet the requirement because Human and Natural Resources Canada and the Quebec government did not share data detailing how government funds were disbursed in the community during the last fiscal year.

Algonquin First Nation lawyer Katherine Hensel said that letters to Atmacinta Hartel Financial Management Corp. have gone unanswered. She also wrote to the federal Aboriginal Affairs department outlining "numerous failures" by the Canadian government and the management company in regard to their obligations to Barrière Lake.

The community's finances were put under third-party management by the federal government several years after conflict erupted over who was its legitimate chief.

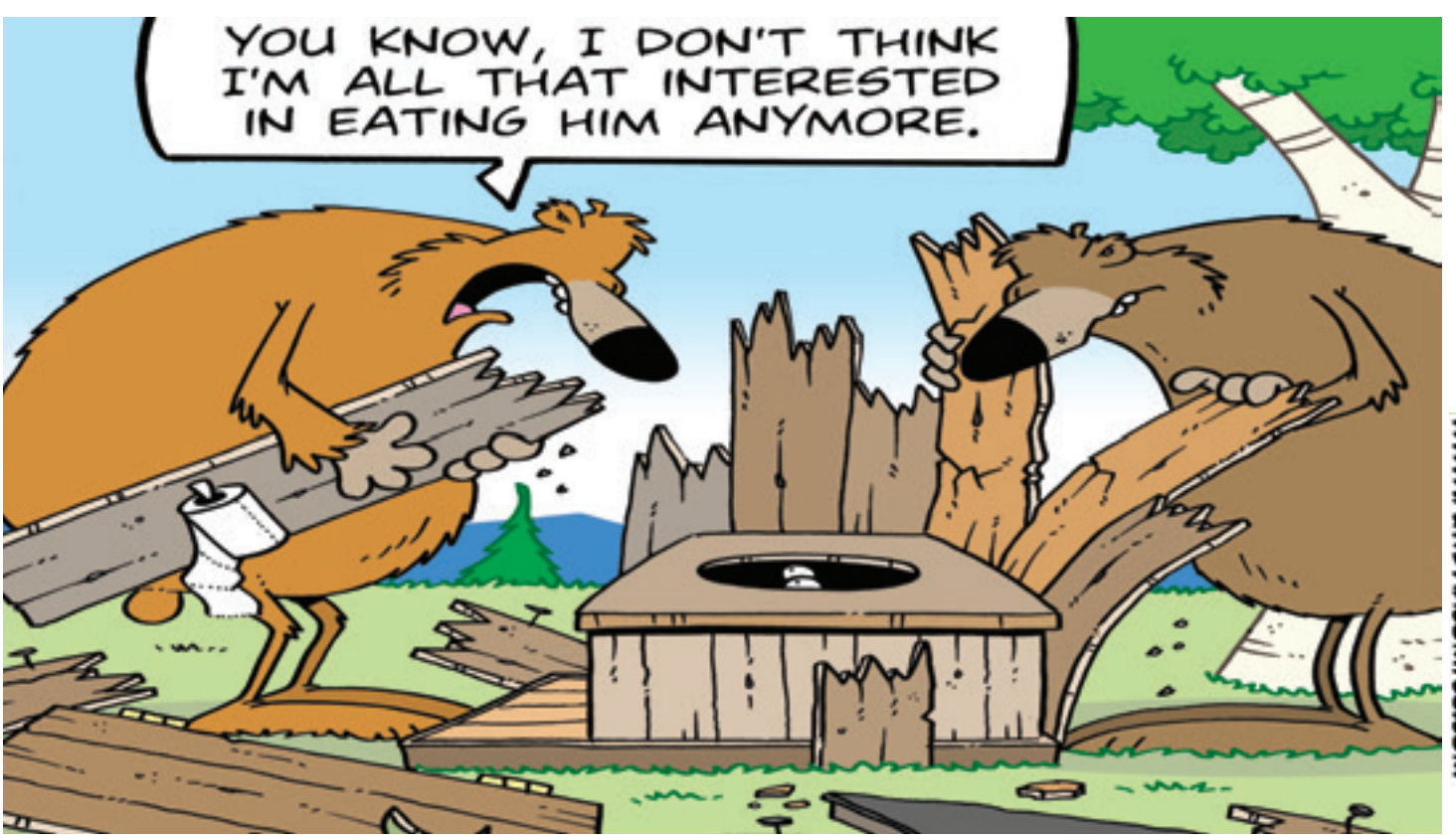
Stoking the Ring of Fire

Webequie Chief Cornelius Wabasse recently voiced his opinion on how he feels economic development in northern Ontario's Ring of Fire can be achieved, citing "the road that leads to respect and recognition for Webequie and our Indigenous neighbours, ….our laws, our treaty and our inherent right to self-determination" as the only way to proceed.

"We have always lived here," says Wabassie in an article on www.newsledger.com. "We are not going anywhere. We have our own laws separate from Canadian laws. Our laws were given to us by the Creator. We are the stewards of our lands."

Wabasse went further to outline three steps that would ensure the success of mining and other economic development among northern Ontario's Aboriginal communities. First of all, any agreements should "reflect a true, deep and enduring partnership…[and] respect and recognize Indigenous peoples' role in every aspect and dimension of development in the Ring of Fire." Secondly, Wabasse says all existing treaties and agreements must be reiterated and understood before new ones can be reached, as a part of the ongoing process of treaty implementation.

Finally, Wabasse calls for "strategic human, social and economic investments" from federal and provincial governments that will respond to the needs of the Webquie Ojibway community and the similar needs of their neighbouring First Nations.



feature

Celebrating life in the Arctic

Huffington Post names Inuit publication Best Bedtime Book of 2014

by Amy German

Flipping through the pages of Celina Kalluk's children's story, *Sweetest Kulu*, it's not hard to understand why The Huffington Post named it the Best Bedtime Story of 2014. The book is a breathtaking work of art that celebrates Inuit culture, children and the precious gift of wildlife in the High Arctic.

Every December the popular online newsmagazine publishes a list of the year's Best Picture Books. This year, *Sweetest Kulu* was its only Canadian nomination.

While she wasn't expecting the international recognition for her book, Kalluk, a Nunavut mother of four who lives in Iqaluit but hails from Resolute Bay, said the acknowledgment was very surprising.

"It's pretty exciting! This little book has been part of me for all of my life so having it read and understood and appreciated is amazing. Children deserve this kind of worship from us, the world, the land and from the animals. It is like a universal language, this love for a child.

"I am very appreciative and happy that it has taken off so well as it comes from a place within me that was true to my children," said Kalluk.

Sweetest Kulu is a bedtime poem told from the perspective of a mother to her baby about the child's birth and the many gifts that come from the animals in the north to ensure the survival of the child.

Discussing how the book came about, Kalluk said she had met one of the book's publishers, Neil Christopher, years before the establishment of Inhabit Media, an Inuit-owned publishing company based in Iqaluit.

"I have known Neil Christopher for years as he was my high-school teacher in Resolute Bay. It was one of his first teaching jobs and here he was all of the way out in my hometown. We learned about each other's artistic styles that way. He encouraged and inspired me as he is very artistic himself," said Kalluk.

Since Inhabit Media's mission is to encourage Inuit and non-Inuit Arctic residents to share their stories and their knowledge by publishing a series of breathtaking children's picture books, it was actually Christopher's idea to approach Kalluk about writing her book.

Artistic in other mediums, such as sewing, painting and drawing, Kalluk said Christopher really liked her

work, which is inspired by where she comes from.

There is a tremendous amount of art in Inuit communities and that inspiration is something Kalluk cherishes deeply.

Inhabit Media is an Inuit publishing house, and all their books are published in English and Inuktitut. Kalluk wrote the English and Inuktitut versions of her poem at the same time. She said the title, *Sweetest Kulu*, has a different ring to it than its Inuit version, but it means the same thing in terms of love and affection: in Inuktitut, "Kulu" is a tender term of endearment for little ones.

"Much of my life is consumed by being a mother and also having been raised in an Inuit environment in the High Arctic, this poem came very naturally to me because it is all about the life, the land and the animals I know. There is so much magic in the High Arctic because it's such an unbelievable place to live and at the same time one of the harshest places to live," said Kalluk.

> "Children deserve this kind of worship from us, the world, the land and from the animals. It is like a universal language, this love for a child."

Kalluk said she wrote the book while living in Toronto and pregnant with her last child. She deeply felt the fact that she was living away from friends, family and her other children.

As a result, Kalluk said she had lots of time to be completely consumed and in love with the child growing within her even though she was missing home tremendously. So when her mother would send her little gifts

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from the north, such as caribou and polar bear meat that was otherwise unavailable in Toronto, she would reflect on home.

"With this it wasn't hard to acknowledge the ancient relationship between these beautiful animals and the Inuit that is all about thriving on the land, survival, celebration and thankfulness," she observed.

"I was always told that these animals give themselves to us and we have to be deserving of them. If we are not, they are not going to give themselves to us. They are either going to decline in numbers and become extinct because we are messing around with them by not being all of the bad things that we can be, but by being well in the heart and balanced in life you are given abundance because you deserve it. This rings true about so many other aspects in life; in particular how a baby will survive in the High Arctic if an animal gives itself and its gifts to that child."

Alexandria Neonakis' phenomenal artwork brings this story to life. Kalluk said she has never met or spoken with illustrator, but the results are something very special.

The book's author and illustrator have never met, explained Kalluk. She had made a storyboard for the book and then was shown samplings of Neonakis' work, and she immediately fell in love with the illustrator's style.

While Kalluk said she wasn't entirely familiar with the Huffington Post prior to the big nod, she welcomed the acknowledgement of her work because it gives her the opportunity to share her culture and story with so many more people around the world.

HEALTH MATTERS

by Amy German

Quitting time

Effectively fighting the monkey on your back

As 2015 begins to settle in, many of us are trying to keep our New Year's resolutions, with varying degrees of success.

While some folks vow to lose the weight they may have put on over the holidays from rich foods and indulgences of all kinds, others have pledged to quit smoking or stop drinking.

But, how well we succeed depends entirely on each individual and our relationship with our weaknesses. Putting away the cigarettes may be fairly easy for some but for others it's the highest mountain they will ever climb. Just like eliminating alcohol or drugs from one's life is a long shot during a struggle with addiction.

What does addiction look like? If you want to quit smoking and are living in Eeyou Istchee, what are your options? What about coping without your fix (whatever that might be); what can you do? And finally, if you are really struggling with substance abuse and want to end it, what do you need to do?

The following is an exploration of the theme of "quitting" in various situations.

Alcoholism, addiction and recovery

A father and grandfather, Roger Orr is a recovering addict who was a National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP) worker for many years. He has since moved on to become an entrepreneur and a public speaker on issues of suicide, alcohol and drugs, sexual abuse and other related topics.

Orr's father left the family when he was three, and his mother had to be both his mom and dad, a provider and a residential-school survivor all at the same time. While he had a much older brother, and eventually had much younger sisters, for a long time he was alone with his mom.

"I encountered a lot of loneliness and bullying when I was young and so in the end, after pleading for help and trying to get some from the ones I thought should hear me or be sympathetic to my issues, I found myself betrayed. As a result, I found myself turning into someone else for many years and this led to addictions because these addictions became my saviour. In the end, pot and alcohol became my saviour because when I had this stuff, my bullying stopped," said Orr.

Orr said his relationship with alcohol began when he was just nine years old, but it was in Grade 7 that he found himself making an effort to get his hands on it. By that time he was about 11 or 12, when he was a victim of heavy bullying. Alcohol and eventually drugs became his coping strategy.

Orr survived this way for more than two decades until he finally chose to check himself into a treatment program when he was in his 30s. That's when his life had spiraled out of control. In all, he said he spent about 24 years abusing substances, which finally culminated into something he could no longer handle.

"There was a lot of family dysfunction going on and I was having financial problems as a lot of money was going into my addictions. I was also feeling the effects of alcohol very rapidly when I drank. With just four beers I was beyond the stage of immunity. Sometimes we can reach an immunity stage where we can drink and drink without blacking out and are able to remember what we did and are immune to the hangovers.

"There are three stages of alcoholism and I was at the beginning of the third stage where I was urinating every five to 10 minutes. I would get up from the table and lose my balance even after only four beers and then I would also have intense blackouts where I wouldn't remember a single thing. I went from being immune to alcohol to experiencing all of this in just one year as my drinking would increase when I would encounter certain things. I would just drink and drink and drink and do more drugs. I was basically binging.

"Once I recovered from my hangover after a couple of days I would be popping open another beer. I had to have my morning glory and my nightcap, which was pot, and so I had to have that every day. For 14 years I smoked every single day. On top of that my cocaine use was on the increase, and I also did a lot of mushrooms."

When he began to rediscover sobriety, Orr said he had to learn how to be himself all over again.

"When I was going through those emotions, there was a lot of fear, anger, loneliness and depression and I had no idea as to how to deal with this on a natural basis and so this was very difficult. There was a lot of mood swings – it was a rollercoaster ride of emotional confusion. I didn't want to go back to the bottle just to numb myself, but at the same time, at 33 after 24 years I had absolutely no idea how to deal with my emotions or the truths that I was running from. The inevitable that I was running from was right there," said Orr.

"It was very difficult. I had to go for a lot of therapy and counseling and other treatment programs, such as recovery enhancement programs, anger management and admitting to my self-defeating character defects. This was the hardest part and it was very scary because the realities were there and the bottle wasn't."

Fortunately, Orr not only managed to stick with his recovery program, but he has since gone on to help many others get sober and stay that way.

Orr said says the difference between someone who can just use a bit as opposed to a substance abuser is quite simple. Some people are quite capable of social drinking and not letting it affect the rest of their lives, their families, work or studies, he said. Then there are others whose lives spiral out of control.

Understanding addiction and quitting

According to Josée Quesnel, the Planning, Programming and Research Officer in Addiction at the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB), it is one thing to simply eliminate a substance from your life if you don't have addictive behaviour. But s New Year's resolution is not enough to deal with a serious addiction. Going cold turkey for some may not be the best strategy.

The reason for this, according to Quesnel, is that the issue may be too large to simply say that you are going to just quit alcohol or drugs or gambling or compulsive eating because if the user could simply stop cold, it wouldn't be an addiction.

"This is the wrong approach because while you may be able to stop it in the short term, two weeks later you will be back at the same behaviour," said Quesnel.

Quesnel said that while deciding the New Year will be the time you tackle your addiction, it is much different from just trying to give up the substance as a resolution. That's because dealing with addiction requires a lot of planning and work.

According to Quesnel, if you want to work on addiction issues, you need to get advice, create a plan and maybe even get some counseling. As she points out, there is a process that goes far beyond simply stopping the behaviour cold turkey on New Year's Day as a resolution.

"When you want to quit you need to understand what you are going through right now and why you are at this point in your life. An assessment with a counselor is absolutely necessary. You will then have someone who is not caught up with the addiction and who can be objective when it comes to helping you see the situation for what it is," said Quesnel.

For those who feel that they may have a substance-abuse problem, help is available at your local clinic.

"JUST GETTING THESE FEELINGS OUT AND SHARING THIS CAN REALLY HELP. YOU NEED TO EXPRESS YOUR FRUSTRATION IN HAVING A CRAVING AND NOT HAVING WHAT YOU WANT."

If cigarettes are your addiction

According to Ron Shisheesh, the Program Planning Research Officer for Tobacco under Public Health at the CBHSSJB, cigarettes are the most addictive substance and the biggest killer in the world. That said, there are numerous ways to end an addiction to tobacco.

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A former smoker himself, Shisheesh said his role is to run smoking cessation programs and to ensure access for every Cree who would like to quit. Shisheesh said he has a particular focus in his department on peer programs for Cree youth.

"The goal with the youth is to get them to start thinking about tobacco critically and have a look at what is in a cigarette. For anyone who wants to quit, once they know what's in a cigarette, they have a much better chance at quitting. There are all kinds of chemicals in tobacco," explains Shisheesh.

For adults, Shisheesh said there are trained Community Health Representatives (CHRs) in every community available to run stop-smoking programs.

As every individual is different, what works for one person may not work for the next.

"There are a lot of underlying issues about why people smoke. Sometimes it's about stress relief or it's a habit that they picked up due to peer pressure when they were kids and then they just get addicted to it.

"Some people can go cold turkey and others go with nicotine replacements like the patch or the lozenges," said Shisheesh.

If you want to quit smoking, the first step is to pick a quit date and then begin to cut back so that you can lessen the addiction as much as possible before that last puff.

The next step is an assessment at a clinic to see how much you smoke and what kinds of options are available. While some patients opt for nicotine-replacement therapy through the patch, gum or lozenge, others choose a prescription from their doctor for one of the drugs that address psychological urges to smoke.

Shisheesh stressed that getting help from a clinic and from friends and family is a major factor when it comes to breaking the habit. If you can get through the initial few weeks of difficulty then the chances of staying smoke-free can skyrocket.

Many wonderful things result from a successful attempt to quit: improved breathing, an enhanced sense of taste, lowered blood pressure, better fitness and a longer life to share with those you love. Some men will appreciate their enhanced stamina during intimate moments with their partners.

As for those powerful cigarette cravings, Shisheesh said they will pass. He suggested trying to flush the need out with water, going for a brisk walk or simply talking to a friend.

Lending an ear

According to Nicole Rioux, who is a Youth Protection Consultant with the CBHSSJB, one of the greatest tools in battling any addiction is to simply talk about it, to express those feelings of desperation.

She knows how it feels: Rioux used to smoke two packs of cigarettes every day.

"One of the best suggestions that we can make is if you are struggling, to talk about it. Find someone who you can trust. It could be a friend, someone at the clinic, a religious leader, a traditional healer, an Elder or whoever else you like, but find someone who can help you and tell them that you are craving whatever it is that you are craving and share how you feel," said Rioux.

Since she began to work with the Cree a few years ago, one of the things Rioux has found the most remarkable about the culture is how Crees tend not to be demonstrative about their frustrations unless they are absolutely at the end of their rope. For this reason she strongly emphasizes that talking about the craving to give in to the cigarette temptation is incredibly beneficial.

This works for whatever addiction you are trying to kick, be it cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, gambling, compulsive eating or even Internet pornography.

And, if you know that you are going to be going through a process where you are going to be giving up something that you have an addictive pattern with, she suggested that you find someone you can trust, and who is going to be there for you when you need it. This person can be a friend, someone at the clinic, a religious leader, a traditional healer, an Elder or someone you like just so long as they can lend you that ear when you need it.

"Just getting these feelings out and sharing them can really help. You need to express your frustration in having a craving and not having what you want.

Looking back at her successful battle against smoking 12 years ago, Rioux recounted how she would say, "I want a cigarette now," at least five times per day. While her desire to smoke remained, she said that expressing and facing her feelings helped reduce the anxiety.

"You don't need to explain your entire life to everyone; the point is just to share. Laugh about it, and don't take yourself seriously!"

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To post or not to post?

by Akiva Levitas

Once something is shared in cyberspace, it's hard to completely remove

Nowadays almost everyone is online. With social platforms ranging from Pinterest and Facebook to Twitter and Instagram, there are many digital ways to reach out to the world. But one must tread lightly in their online travels. Legal pitfalls are as common as potholes on Montreal streets. There are plenty of horror stories of people's interaction with social media from Facebook profile pictures being used in penis enlargement ads to being sued for defamation. So to better help understand what happens when you hit "post", here are some things to be aware of:

1. You own what you post on Facebook. However, when you post on Facebook or other social-media platforms, you give them the right to use your content – as stated in their end-user agreement – "you grant us non-exclusive, transferable, sub-licensable, royalty-free, worldwide license to use any IP content that you post." Even if you delete the content, if others have already shared the post they must also delete it in order to end the license. So be aware that once you post something online, you might never be able to take it down.
2. Libel, the publication on any public platform of demonstrably false information with a clear disregard for the truth that causes damage to someone's reputation, including corporations, can have devastating legal consequences. Even when discussing things in private through any online messaging system, if it can be proven that it was shown to a third party then it constitutes libel. Although libel suits do not get thrown around too often, you must be absolutely sure that any reputation-damaging information you post is true.
3. Online harassment and bullying can get land you in jail. Many recent high-profile examples of online bullying that ended with young people committing suicide have led authorities to implement severe legal punishment for perpetrators. Everything you post online or message is saved in internal servers and can be brought into court as evidence. The best way to avoid this is to respect someone's request to leave him or her alone. Someone who feels victimized by your words can now more easily present them as criminal harassment. When you post online, they are permanent and irrefutable, unlike a face-to-face conversation.
4. The breaching of contracts is another way for you to get into trouble online. What you post is out there for everyone to see. So if you're posting something about your workplace, make sure that you are not posting information that is sensitive to its function or you might find yourself facing a breach of contract and the resulting consequences. In other words, you could be fired, or worse.
5. Hate speech is a tough nut to crack since it is a murky area of the law thanks to the constitutional guarantee to freedom of speech. Most hate speech gets dealt with internally as other users report it and the post gets deleted. However, if you have a wide enough following and the figurative cat is out of the bag, then you may find yourself in a lot more trouble.

A good rule of thumb before posting is to ask yourself: "Would I want everyone I know and their acquaintances to see this post?" In the end, you have the freedom to post whatever thoughts cross your mind. But you will have to face the consequences following the posting. Think of those New Year's Eve parties you just attended: they probably offered lots of opportunities to post embarrassing material on the Internet that you never wanted or thought was being documented. The tricky part is getting those posts removed.

Academic commitment

McGill University launches its Indigenous Studies program

by Joel Barde

McGill University is known globally as a top-tier research university, attracting elite students from Canada and beyond. But some say its commitment to First Nations studies and students lags behind other Canadian post-secondary institutions.

This December McGill embarked on a path to challenge that sentiment, unveiling an Indigenous Studies minor option for its undergraduate students. The program will allow students to focus on themes like Aboriginal art and culture and the legacy of Indigenous resistance to the Canadian state.

Establishing a First Nations Studies program has been a hot topic on campus since the early 2000s, when the head of a McGill community and resource centre for Indigenous students began calling on the university to set one up.

Students wanted a program, too. Their desire was reflected in a 2011 editorial in the McGill Daily, the student newspaper. It lamented the low number of Aboriginal students at McGill, and the institution's failure to establish the program. According to the Daily, only around 150 McGill students are identified as Aboriginal – less than 1% of its student body.

"McGill needs to introduce an Indigenous Studies program – it is needed both to aid the cause of increasing Aboriginal enrolment at McGill and to create a space for analysis of the very oppression that prevents many Aboriginal individuals from accessing post-secondary education," stated the editorial.

As Vice President (University Affairs) of the Students' Society of McGill University, Claire Stewart-Kanigan helped push for the program on the administrative front.

Stewart-Kanigan says that the key was to get faculty to "buy in." Initially, the Department of Anthropology was going to administer the program. When that fell through, the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada (MISC) stepped in and now fills that role.

Stewart-Kanigan says the program was the result of grass-roots demand, organization and agitation.

"I feel the university is hesitant to take on extra costs and duties until they are forced to. It got to the point where it was so far behind, and demand from students was so long and outstanding, that the pressure was too much to overlook."

Photo by: Bryce Richter

Professor Ned Blackhawk

Stewart-Kanigan says she hopes the program will help foster a larger Indigenous student body at McGill. She reckons that the number of Indigenous students has not increased since 2011, and it is still around 150.

Stewart-Kanigan feels that the minor is a step in the right direction, but says that McGill is behind other western Canadian universities in attracting and accommodating First Nations students.

Professor Ned Blackhawk completed his BA History at McGill in 1992 and went on to complete his PhD in History at the University of Washington. He now teaches Native American history and Native American law at Yale University. Last semester he helped develop the curriculum for McGill's Indigenous Studies minor along with Allan Downey, a non-tenured McGill professor who will oversee the program.

He says that he sees the program's creation as an auspicious moment for McGill and the province at large.

"It's important intellectually and ethically to develop a more diverse scholarly community around issues of difference around Canada's future," says Blackhawk.

"Canada should make an increasing commitment in advancing scholarly inquiry into Native study to prepare itself for what could be a very contentious struggle going forward, especially when politicians maintain the status quo."

Blackhawk says Montreal is extraordinarily well placed to establish a strong Indigenous Studies program.

"Montreal is probably one of the most influential urban spaces in the history of North America. It was founded in the early 1500s by French settlers and missionaries. It had a fur economy rooted for over 150 years around Indigenous labour. It was an epicentre of exchange."

With that said, Blackhawk says the pressure is now on McGill to chart a positive future. And to so it must include Indigenous faculty.

The minor is currently being overseen by Downey, a member of the Nak'azdi First Nation in British Columbia. As a non-tenured professor, he is on a short-term contract, and McGill has not hired any other Indigenous faculty for the program. "The critical variable is the absence of Native faculty," says Blackhawk.

This is at odds with other post-secondary Canadian universities. The University of British Columbia and University of Victoria, for example, both have long-standing First Nations Studies programs taught largely by Indigenous professors.

Concordia University offers a major as well as a minor in First Peoples Studies. It currently employs two professors in First Peoples Studies – Dr. Louellyn White (Mohawk, Akwesasne) and Dr. Karl Hele (Anishinaabe, Garden River) – and four other Indigenous professors in other faculties and several Indigenous part-time instructors.

> "It's important intellectually and ethically to develop a more diverse scholarly community around issues of difference around Canada's future."

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Discovering joyous health

Joy McCarthy's latest book may be your ticket to getting back on track

by Amy German

Come January, after weeks of calories, cocktails and kicking back on the couch, a nagging thought reminds many of us that, as enjoyable as they were to acquire, it's time to work off our holiday pounds.

A crash diet isn't necessarily the right way to go about this often-difficult task, however.

According to holistic nutritionist Joy McCarthy, weight-loss attempts are more effective with diets based on unfussy, fresh foods. McCarthy details this strategy in her book, *Joyous Health: Eat and Live Well without Dieting*.

Joyous Health is a lifestyle-and-eating guide based on the principles of holistic nutrition. It contains many great suggestions and recipes for those looking for a healthy, natural eating plan. Some may disagree with her philosophy, but McCarthy's book is helpful tool to avoid junk food and embrace nutritious meals.

Joyous Health is also well-written, accessible and spiced with catch phrases that are fun to say aloud. My favourite is, "discipline is remembering what you want."

McCarthy also focuses on "mindful eating," which is a meditative-and-self-awareness philosophy about eating based on Buddhist teachings. It is a simple-yet-effective technique to gain awareness of what we are putting into our bodies and why.

If you are unfamiliar with what should be going into a balanced diet, want to learn more about holistic nutrition or about taking nutrition supplements, this book is a great place to start. Many of the recipes are simple and healthy, includes delicious smoothies, sumptuous soups, and salads that will convince the biggest carnivores to go green.

My only criticism is that I am not a fan of the philosophy of detoxifying one's body through major diet changes or that one's liver needs any assistance to cleanse itself. This is one of the fundamental principles of holistic nutrition, and McCarthy provides a solid foundation for anyone interested in this approach.

Quibbles aside, her principles will certainly improve your health with good nutrition suggestions that are tasty and easy to make.

Turkey Burgers with Guac Salsa

This recipe is fabulous any time of year – it's fresh and light for the warmer months, but the flavours are rich and comforting for winter. I love making extra burgers and eating them chilled the next day with a salad – so satisfying! I love homemade salsa and guacamole, so I combined them in this fresh, vibrant topping for the burgers – or enjoy it with organic blue corn chips.

Makes 4 to 6 burgers

Guac Salsa

2 ripe avocados, peeled and cubed
1 tomato, chopped
½ small red onion, finely chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
Juice of 1 to 2 limes
Pinch of sea salt

Burgers

1 egg (or 1 tbsp/15 mL chia seeds soaked in ¼ cup/60 mL water for 4 minutes)
2 tbsp (30 mL) wheat-free tamari sauce
1 lb (450 g) ground organic turkey
1 sweet onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, chopped
8 sun-dried tomatoes, sliced in slivers
5 to 7 cremini mushrooms, chopped
¼ cup (60 mL) chopped fresh parsley
1 tbsp (15 mL) hot chili flakes

Preheat grill to medium or oven to 350°F (180°C).

For the Guac Salsa, in a small bowl, combine avocados, tomato, onion and garlic; stir. Pour lime juice to taste over top and sprinkle with sea salt. Set aside.

For the burgers, in a large bowl, whisk together egg and tamari. Add turkey, onion, garlic, tomatoes, mushrooms, parsley and chili flakes; mix well with your hands (it's messy, so you might want to wear gloves). Form into 4 to 6 patties, depending how large you like your burgers.

Grill burgers, with the lid closed and turning once, for 10 to 12 minutes or until cooked completely. Or bake for 7 to 9 minutes, flip them over and bake for another 7 to 9 minutes. Serve with Guac Salsa.

Green Goddess Smoothie

This smoothie is a match made in nutrition heaven because the plant-based protein and good fat will keep your belly full for hours. And the green ingredients, including spinach, kale and mint, are a good source of detoxifying chlorophyll. Bonus: it's super yummy!

Makes 1 or 2 smoothies

- 2 tbsp (30 mL) hemp seeds
- 1 banana
- ½ ripe avocado, peeled
- 1 cup (250 mL) spinach
- 1 cup (250 mL) frozen tropical fruit (pineapple or mango)
- ½ cup (125 mL) kale torn in large pieces, stems removed
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) chia seeds
- ¼ tsp (1 mL) chopped fresh mint
- 1 cup (250 mL) almond or hemp milk
- Filtered water, just enough for desired consistency

Reserve 1 tbsp (15 mL) hemp seeds for garnish. Place all ingredients in a blender. Blend for 30 to 60 seconds, until smooth. Pour into a glass and garnish with reserved hemp seeds.

Chickpea Detox Salad

This crunchy salad is a summertime favourite of mine. It's so quick and easy to make and keeps in the fridge for at least a week. The fiber and phytonutrients make this an ideal detox meal.

Serves 2

- 1 can (15 oz/425 g) garbanzo beans (chickpeas), drained and rinsed
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced
- 5 stalks celery, cut in bite-size pieces
- 1 sweet red pepper, cut in bite-size pieces
- ¼ cup (60 mL) cilantro, chopped
- 1 or 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ cup (60 mL) freshly squeezed lemon juice
- ¼ cup (60 mL) extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ tsp (2 mL) sea salt
- ½ tsp (2 mL) cayenne pepper

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl; toss well. Let sit for an hour so the flavours can mingle.

Raw Carrot Cake Balls

One of my all-time favourite desserts is carrot cake. These yummy cookie balls, made with shredded carrots and spices, tastes just like it! Because they are completely raw, you can make them in a snap.

Makes 18 to 20 balls

- ¾ cup (175 mL) unsweetened shredded coconut
- 6 Medjool dates, pitted
- ¾ cup (175 mL) walnuts
- ½ cup (125 mL) grated carrots
- ¼ cup (60 mL) hemp seeds
- ¼ cup (60 mL) honey
- 1 tsp (5 mL) pure vanilla extract
- 1 tsp (5 mL) cinnamon
- ½ tsp (2 mL) nutmeg
- ¼ tsp (1 mL) ground cloves

Reserve ¼ cup (60 mL) shredded coconut in a shallow dish for rolling. Place remaining ingredients in a high-powered food processor and process until fully combined. Form mixture into 1-inch (2.5 cm) balls and roll in reserved shredded coconut, coating balls completely. Transfer to a baking sheet and refrigerate for a few hours or overnight. Keep chilled, or freeze in an airtight container for a few months (though I guarantee they won't last that long). Enjoy 1 or 2 as a snack or dessert.

Winter Driving In The North Is Deadly

by Xavier Kataquapit

This is the time of the year that I fear for my safety the most. The reason for my fear has to do with winter driving on roads anywhere in the north of just about any province in Canada. One stretch in particular is very dangerous. The Trans Canada highway that runs through northern Ontario is treacherous for most of the winter. Often I have had very close calls with death on this highway and I have witnessed many bad accidents.

The main highways all though Northern Ontario are in fact dangerous from November to April and sometimes into May depending on how severe the winter is. The biggest problem has to do with ice on the roads and the fact that most of these highways are two lanes with opposing traffic. There are no dividers on most of these roadways so drivers are more or less playing Russian roulette when venturing out in bad weather.

Like most northerners I have always taken for granted that we are simply stuck with having to drive on these icy, dangerous roads and that it is necessary to throw caution to the wind when we want to go somewhere on these highways. We think nothing of heading out in bad weather and on icy roads where we meet oncoming traffic and pass only a few feet from tons of metal on wheels coming our way. I can recall many drives where after a few hours my hands were cramped and stiff because I had been holding on to the steering wheel so tight as I made my way along an icy highway with certain death only feet away.

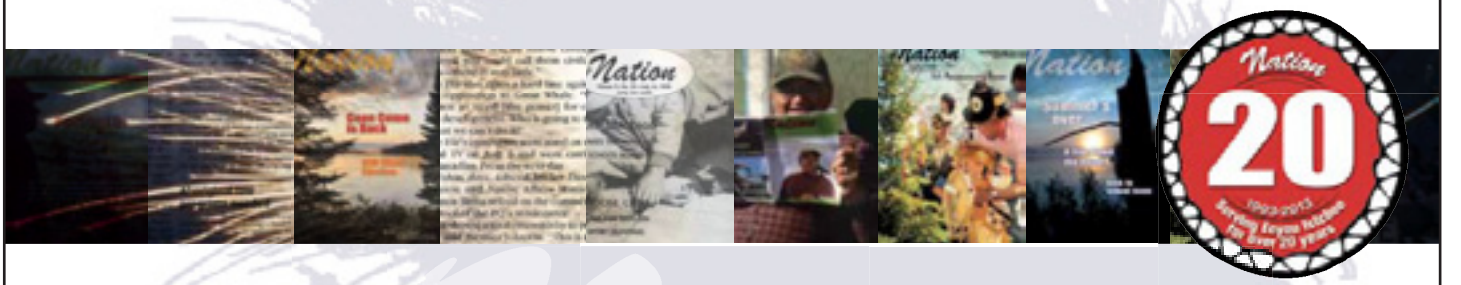
I have seen the result of two vehicles colliding head on in accidents on northern highways. You can imagine the result of two cars, trucks, vans or transports hitting each other while going about 100 kilometres an hour. The force of the impact is huge and most of the time somebody dies.

When I first started driving on these roads 15 years ago the traffic was bad enough in the winter. However, things have gotten progressively worse as more and more transport trucks are using these roads to make there way through the province or across Canada. When I drive on Highway 11 in Northern Ontario I am amazed at the steady flow of transports I meet.

When the weather is bad in the winter and the roads are icy those transports trucks are still the main traffic on northern highways. Most of the accidents on these roadways involve these huge trucks that sometimes actually pull two trailers. Even in perfect conditions these giant trucks are not all that safe to drive so you can imagine how perilous things get when there is snow and ice on the highway and perhaps freezing rain or a blizzard. People die in these conditions in accidents that really should never happen. Somehow the huge truck traffic has kidnapped our road systems for the sake of moving goods around and the general public is very much at risk in sharing the roadways with these mammoth vehicles.

Even if you are a very good driver it is always possible that you might hit a patch of ice on the road while meeting one of these huge trucks and lose control. That could happen the other way around also with a transport truck losing control on icy roads and in bad weather. Often I see these huge trucks travelling in more or less convoys on the highway and in really bad storms that poses a big problem for other motorists in cars. As these trucks come at you on the highway they throw up snow and slush that can completely cover your windshield and cause you to lose control. Often I have been blinded by trucks meeting me and exploding slush and snow onto my windshield. To make matters worse when there are a few of these trucks in a row and following each other that happens several times and that is so dangerous for even the best driver to deal with.

I donít really understand why we ever moved away from transporting most goods around by train. That seemed to work very well and it meant very little transport truck traffic on the roads. I guess it had to do with the bottom line and money but really that choice has resulted in too many needless deaths on our highways. Even the winter road that I once travelled on often from Moosonee to Attawapiskat now has many transport trucks hauling goods up north. We need some creative solutions to move goods around that do not threaten the public. Perhaps it is time to look again at using the train system for most shipping and come up with creative solutions like helium airships. Anything but giant trucks on icy roads would be an improvement.



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